# Observation One: Revolutionary Suicide

# In the status quo school discipline has overwhelmingly shifted towards an emphasis on punishment and zero tolerance, this change has negatively impacted academic achievement, student health, and led to massive discrimination.

**Evenson 2009** – Amber Evenson [School Psychologist with the Proviso Area for Exceptional Children] Elizabeth Pelischek [School Psychologist] Brooklyn Justinger and Sarah Schulz [School Psychologists]. “Zero Tolerance Policies and the Public Schools: When Suspension Is No Longer Effective.” National Association of School Psychologists Communiqué. Volume 37, Issue 5 January/February 2009. <http://www.nasponline.org/publications/cq/37/5/zerotolerance.aspx>

The emphasis in school discipline has shifted from a prevention and correction model to a reactive and punitive model in recent years (Bear, Cavalier, & Manning, 2002; Cohn & Canter, 2004). This major shift has occurred in response to fears among legislators and the public who are under the impression that school violence has increased. As a result, crisis response teams have been created and a zero tolerance approach to discipline has been adopted by many school districts (Bear et al., 2002). Specifically, zero tolerance can be defined as school-wide or district-wide policies that mandate typically harsh consequences or punishments such as suspensions and expulsions for a wide range of rule violations (Bear et al., 2002; Cohn & Canter, 2004). Contrary to popular belief, research indicates that zero tolerance policies are ineffective in the long run and are related to a number of negative outcomes. Some of these outcomes include elevated rates of school dropout, poor school climate, low academic achievement, and discriminatory school discipline practices. Zero tolerance policies typically fail to increase school safety and often restrict students from accessing education (Skiba, Cohn, & Canter, 2004). Furthermore, research shows that suspension negatively impacts the mental health and physical well being of students. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2003), suspension of school-aged youth with behavioral problems is associated with high rates of depression, drug addiction, and home life stresses. In addition, suspension may predispose these children to antisocial behavior and suicidal ideation (Sundius & Farneth, 2008). Therefore, educators should return to a prevention/correction model for deterring inappropriate behavior.

**The use of exclusionary discipline represents modern day segregation, where abandoning students is the norm and the inevitable result is incarceration.**

**Lynch 2013 –** Matthew Lynch Ed.D. [Chairman of the Department of Elementary & Special Education and an Associate Professor of Education at Langston University]. “Breaking the School-to-Prison Cycle.” Huffington Post. June 12th, 2013. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthew-lynch-edd/breaking-the-school-to-pr_b_3429423.html>

When one student is causing a classroom disruption, the traditional way to address the issue has been removal - whether the removal is for five minutes, five days or permanently. Separating the "good" students and the "bad" ones has always seemed the fair, judicious approach. On an individual level this form of discipline may seem necessary to preserve the educational experience for others. If all children came from homes that implemented a cause-and-effect approach to discipline, this might be the right answer. Unfortunately, an increasing number of students come from broken homes, or ones where parents have not the desire or time to discipline. For these students, removal from education is simply another form of abandonment and leads to the phenomenon called the "school-to-prison pipeline." The numbers represent a modern-day segregation. An estimated 40 percent of all students that are expelled from U.S. schools are black, making black students over three times more likely to face suspension than their white peers. When you add in Latino numbers, 70 percent of all in-school arrests are black or Latino students. If you want to see the correlation between these school-age statistics and lifetime numbers, consider this: 61 percent of the incarcerated population are black or Latino - despite the fact that these groups only represent 30 percent of the U.S. population. Nearly 68 percent of all men in federal prison never earned a high school diploma. The fact that the U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world is no surprise. The road to lockup starts in the school systems.

**We Isolate Two Impact Scenarios:**

**Scenario One is Slavery:**

**1. This disparity in educational outcomes socializes children into a criminality, creating a base of cheap labor for prisons. This destroys the social fabric of communities by increasing joblessness, poverty, family separation, and foreclosing any possible reform.**

**Wallace 2012** – Ava Wallace [Writer for National Education Association Today]. “Scrutiny Intensifies Around Zero Tolerance, School to Prison Pipeline.” NEA Today. July 23rd, 2012. <http://neatoday.org/2012/07/23/scrutiny-intensifies-around-zero-tolerance-school-to-prison-pipeline/>

**Can you briefly define the school-to-prison pipeline and talk about the students impacted the most?** The school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon can be characterized as a deliberate strategy to push at-risk children out of our nation’s classrooms and into the carceral state. Research shows that minority students are most impacted by this practice. **What is the cost to our society when we have such a large school-to-prison pipeline?** When youth are disciplined under severe school disciplinary policies, they are less committed to school, do worse academically, and drop out. These negative school outcomes increase the risk of delinquent and criminal behavior over the short and long term, and as a result, have a negative impact on the unemployment rate and the economy. The Center for Labor Studies at Northeastern University found that nearly twenty-three percent of all young Black men ages 16 to 24 who have dropped out of high school are in jail, prison, or a juvenile justice institution in America. We need a national strategy to address the relationship between dropping out and incarceration to prevent the dire consequences, like joblessness and poverty, and their byproduct – increased crime in adulthood. **Many schools already have the trappings of a prison — armed guards, metal detectors, high fences surrounding the grounds. How does this increase the flow of the school-to-prison-pipeline?** According to a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) study, the number of school resource officers rose 38 percent between 1997 and 2007. More officers leads to more criminalized students in the pipeline. A 2005 DOJ study found that children are far more likely to be arrested at school than they were a generation ago. The U.S. Department of Education found that more than 70 percent of students arrested in school-related incidents or referred to law enforcement are Black or Hispanic. The presence of armed guards and other concomitant accessories leads to an over-policing of students that abridges student rights and creates a climate of fear. It turns every disciplinary incident into a criminal incident. Negative stereotypes combined with a heavy concentration of law enforcement officials in schools elevates normal adolescent behavior into criminal behavior —   sometimes a fight is just a fight and not a felony assault. Once you remove the trappings of incarceration, educators are forced to deal with behavioral problems the way they did when I was in school — when principals meted out punishment rather than police officers or armed guards. **Is there economic pressure to create a pipeline to feed the prison privatization economy?** Yes there is.  Young offenders are healthier, have fewer discipline problems, and can stay in the system far longer than adult prisoners. Private prisons have seen considerable growth in their portfolio of managing juvenile facilities. What’s more, prisons are used as an economic development strategy by many communities, especially in rural communities, where many people’s livelihoods depending on incarceration. There is no incentive for the carceral state to find solutions to incarceration and the challenges the poor and oppressed face. Rather than dealing with poverty and oppression head on, the poor and oppressed are incarcerated because of the social condition into which they were born. Black men are viewed as incorrigible reprobates unworthy of rehabilitation. Fake campaigns such as the “War on Drugs” and “Get Tough on Crime” will continue the criminalization of an ever widening range of social problems for the sake of exploiting Black male labor. Politicians are more interested in militarizing the police, building prisons as opposed to providing quality education for every child, creating jobs which provide livable wages, and developing an intelligent sound public health response to drug abuse. Now that incarceration has become a commodity, my fear is that the school-to-prison pipeline is here to stay. **What price will we pay by allowing the prison industrial complex to flourish?** Fyodor Dostoyevsky said, “The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.”  In today’s social and budgetary climate, the business model behind for-profit prisons is sustainable only when investors ignore its inherent social costs and risks. The incarceration rate for females, for example, is increasing at an alarming rate, which means children are becoming wards of the state. Many of these children wind up in jail themselves after spending their childhoods bouncing around the system. The current separation of children from their families has disproportionately impacted the Black community in a tragic social dynamic reminiscent of slavery, which separated family members at unprecedented levels. While this dynamic will guarantee the for-profit prison industry a needed supply of inmates, it will, if not corrected, destroy the already frayed social fabric of certain communities, negatively affecting society as a whole. **How can we fight prison privatization?** I think we have to ensure that we all divest stock in for-profit prison corporations and lead divestiture campaigns against them.  Each of us should become more familiar with private prisons and the role they play in promoting the commercial correctional complex and expanding the prison industrial complex. Finally, we should embrace justice reinvestment strategies which are antithetical to private prisons and the carceral state. Instead of spending money on incarceration, we should use the money to strengthen the infrastructure in urban and rural communities, build better schools, increase pay to attract better teachers to these communities and provide tax abatements for companies willing to invest in these communities

**2. This carceral state fuels the military industrial complex, which perpetrates violent working conditions for workers and global conflict.**

**Flounders 2011 –** Sara Flounders “The Pentagon and Slave Labor in U.S. Prisons.” Global Research. International Action Center and Global Research. June 23rd 2011. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-pentagon-and-slave-labor-in-u-s-prisons>

The expanding use of prison industries, which pay slave wages, as a way to increase profits for giant military corporations, is a frontal attack on the rights of all workers. Prison labor — with no union protection, overtime pay, vacation days, pensions, benefits, health and safety protection, or Social Security withholding — also makes complex components for McDonnell Douglas/Boeing’s F-15 fighter aircraft, the General Dynamics/Lockheed Martin F-16, and Bell/Textron’s Cobra helicopter. Prison labor produces night-vision goggles, body armor, camouflage uniforms, radio and communication devices, and lighting systems and components for 30-mm to 300-mm battleship anti-aircraft guns, along with land mine sweepers and electro-optical equipment for the BAE Systems Bradley Fighting Vehicle’s laser rangefinder. Prisoners recycle toxic electronic equipment and overhaul military vehicles. Labor in federal prisons is contracted out by UNICOR, previously known as Federal Prison Industries, a quasi-public, for-profit corporation run by the Bureau of Prisons. In 14 prison factories, more than 3,000 prisoners manufacture electronic equipment for land, sea and airborne communication. UNICOR is now the U.S. government’s 39th largest contractor, with 110 factories at 79 federal penitentiaries. The majority of UNICOR’s products and services are on contract to orders from the Department of Defense. Giant multinational corporations purchase parts assembled at some of the lowest labor rates in the world, then resell the finished weapons components at the highest rates of profit. For example, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon Corporation subcontract components, then assemble and sell advanced weapons systems to the Pentagon. **Increased profits, unhealthy workplaces:** However, the Pentagon is not the only buyer. U.S. corporations are the world’s largest arms dealers, while weapons and aircraft are the largest U.S. export. The U.S. State Department, Department of Defense and diplomats pressure NATO members and dependent countries around the world into multibillion-dollar weapons purchases that generate further corporate profits, often leaving many countries mired in enormous debt. But the fact that the capitalist state has found yet another way to drastically undercut union workers’ wages and ensure still higher profits to military corporations — whose weapons wreak such havoc around the world — is an ominous development. According to CNN Money, the U.S. highly skilled and well-paid “aerospace workforce has shrunk by 40 percent in the past 20 years. Like many other industries, the defense sector has been quietly outsourcing production (and jobs) to cheaper labor markets overseas.” (Feb. 24) It seems that with prison labor, these jobs are also being outsourced domestically. Meanwhile, dividends and options to a handful of top stockholders and CEO compensation packages at top military corporations exceed the total payment of wages to the more than 23,000 imprisoned workers who produce UNICOR parts. The prison work is often dangerous, toxic and unprotected. At FCC Victorville, a federal prison located at an old U.S. airbase, prisoners clean, overhaul and reassemble tanks and military vehicles returned from combat and coated in toxic spent ammunition, depleted uranium dust and chemicals. A federal lawsuit by prisoners, food service workers and family members at FCI Marianna, a minimum security women’s prison in Florida, cited that toxic dust containing lead, cadmium, mercury and arsenic poisoned those who worked at UNICOR’s computer and electronic recycling factory. Prisoners there worked covered in dust, without safety equipment, protective gear, air filtration or masks. The suit explained that the toxic dust caused severe damage to nervous and reproductive systems, lung damage, bone disease, kidney failure, blood clots, cancers, anxiety, headaches, fatigue, memory lapses, skin lesions, and circulatory and respiratory problems. This is one of eight federal prison recycling facilities — employing 1,200 prisoners — run by UNICOR. After years of complaints the Justice Department’s Office of the Inspector General and the Federal Occupational Health Service concurred in October 2008 that UNICOR has jeopardized the lives and safety of untold numbers of prisoners and staff. (Prison Legal News, Feb. 17, 2009)

**3. This capitalistic and militaristic exploitation legalizes permanent discrimination in the public sphere and forecloses any chance of social betterment. The plan’s deconstruction of oppressive systems creates internal links into every socially responsible reform effort including social services, free education, and infrastructure re-development.**

**Flounders 2011 –** Sara Flounders “The Pentagon and Slave Labor in U.S. Prisons.” Global Research. International Action Center and Global Research. June 23rd 2011. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-pentagon-and-slave-labor-in-u-s-prisons>

The U.S. prison population is not only the largest in the world — it is relentlessly growing. The U.S. prison population is more than five times what it was 30 years ago. In 1980, when Ronald Reagan became president, there were 400,000 prisoners in the U.S. Today the number exceeds 2.3 million. In California the prison population soared from 23,264 in 1980 to 170,000 in 2010. The Pennsylvania prison population climbed from 8,243 to 51,487 in those same years. There are now more African-American men in prison, on probation or on parole than were enslaved in 1850, before the Civil War began, according to Law Professor Michelle Alexander in the book “The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness.” Today a staggering 1-in-100 adults in the U.S. are living behind bars. But this crime, which breaks families and destroys lives, is not evenly distributed. In major urban areas one-half of Black men have criminal records. This means life-long, legalized discrimination in student loans, financial assistance, access to public housing, mortgages, the right to vote and, of course, the possibility of being hired for a job. **State Prisons contracting slave labor:** It is not only federal prisons that contract out prison labor to top corporations. State prisons that used forced prison labor in plantations, laundries and highway chain gangs increasingly seek to sell prison labor to corporations trolling the globe in search of the cheapest possible labor. One agency asks: “Are you experiencing high employee turnover? Worried about the costs of employee benefits? Unhappy with out-of-state or offshore suppliers? Getting hit by overseas competition? Having trouble motivating your workforce? Thinking about expansion space? Then Washington State Department of Corrections Private Sector Partnerships is for you.” (educate-yourself.org, July 25, 2005) Major corporations profiting from the slave labor of prisoners include Motorola, Compaq, Honeywell, Microsoft, Boeing, Revlon, Chevron, TWA, Victoria’s Secret and Eddie Bauer. IBM, Texas Instruments and Dell get circuit boards made by Texas prisoners. Tennessee inmates sew jeans for Kmart and JCPenney. Tens of thousands of youth flipping hamburgers for minimum wages at McDonald’s wear uniforms sewn by prison workers, who are forced to work for much less. In California, as in many states, prisoners who refuse to work are moved to disciplinary housing and lose canteen privileges as well as “good time” credit, which slices hard time off their sentences. Systematic abuse, beatings, prolonged isolation and sensory deprivation, and lack of medical care make U.S. prison conditions among the worst in the world. Ironically, working under grueling conditions for pennies an hour is treated as a “perk” for good behavior. In December, Georgia inmates went on strike and refused to leave their cells at six prisons for more than a week. In one of the largest prison protests in U.S. history, prisoners spoke of being forced to work seven days a week for no pay. Prisoners were beaten if they refused to work. **Private prisons for profit:** In the ruthless search to maximize profits and grab hold of every possible source of income, almost every public agency and social service is being outsourced to private for-profit contractors. In the U.S. military this means there are now more private contractors and mercenaries in Iraq and Afghanistan than there are U.S. or NATO soldiers. In cities and states across the U.S., hospitals, medical care facilities, schools, cafeterias, road maintenance, water supply services, sewage departments, sanitation, airports and tens of thousands of social programs that receive public funding are being contracted out to for-profit corporations. Anything publicly owned and paid for by generations of past workers’ taxes — from libraries to concert halls and parks — is being sold or leased at fire sale prices. All this is motivated and lobbied for by right-wing think tanks like that set up by Koch Industries and their owners, Charles and David Koch, as a way to cut costs, lower wages and pensions, and undercut public service unions. The most gruesome privatizations are the hundreds of for-profit prisons being established. The inmate population in private for-profit prisons tripled between 1987 and 2007. By 2007 there were 264 such prison facilities, housing almost 99,000 adult prisoners. (house.leg.state.mn.us, Feb. 24, 2009) Companies operating such facilities include the Corrections Corporation of America, the GEO Group Inc. and Community Education Centers. Prison bonds provide a lucrative return for capitalist investors such as Merrill-Lynch, Shearson Lehman, American Express and Allstate. Prisoners are traded from one state to another based on the most profitable arrangements. **Militarism and prisons:** Hand in hand with the military-industrial complex, U.S. imperialism has created a massive prison-industrial complex that generates billions of dollars annually for businesses and industries profiting from mass incarceration. For decades workers in the U.S. have been assured that they also benefit from imperialist looting by the giant multinational corporations. But today more than half the federal budget is absorbed by the costs of maintaining the military machine and the corporations who are guaranteed profits for equipping the Pentagon. That is the only budget category in federal spending that is guaranteed to increase by at least 5 percent a year — at a time when every social program is being cut to the bone. The sheer economic weight of militarism seeps into the fabric of society at every level. It fuels racism and reaction. The political influence of the Pentagon and the giant military and oil corporations — with their thousands of high-paid lobbyists, media pundits and network of links into every police force in the country — fuels growing repression and an expanding prison population. The military, oil and banking conglomerates, interlinked with the police and prisons, have a stranglehold on the U.S. capitalist economy and reins of political power, regardless of who is president or what political party is in office. The very survival of these global corporations is based on immediate maximization of profits. They are driven to seize every resource and source of potential profits. Thoroughly rational solutions are proposed whenever the human and economic cost of militarism and repression is discussed. The billions spent for war and fantastically destructive weapons systems could provide five to seven times more jobs if spent on desperately needed social services, education and rebuilding essential infrastructure. Or it could provide free university education, considering the fact that it costs far more to imprison people than to educate them. Why aren’t such reasonable solutions ever chosen? Because military contracts generate far larger guaranteed profits to the military and the oil industries, which have a decisive influence on the U.S. economy. The prison-industrial complex — including the prison system, prison labor, private prisons, police and repressive apparatus, and their continuing expansion — are a greater source of profit and are reinforced by the climate of racism and reaction. Most rational and socially useful solutions are not considered viable options.

**Scenario Two is Sexual Violence:**

**1. This social fabric is further disrupted by exclusionary discipline’s criminalization of black femininity when it deviates from white middle-class norms.**

**Morris 2012 –** Monique W. Morris [2012 Soros Justice Fellow hosted by African American Policy Forum (AAPF). CEO of the MWM Consulting Group, LLC. Former Vice President for the NAACP. Director of Research and Senior Research Fellow at UC Berkeley Law School’s Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice. Senior Research Associate at the National Center on Crime and Delinquency.] “Race, Gender, and the School-To-Prison Pipeline: Expanding Our Discussion to Include Black Girls.” African American Policy Forum. September 17th, 2012. <http://aapf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Morris-Race-Gender-and-the-School-to-Prison-Pipeline.pdf>

School discipline and educational attainment are the two most heavily researched aspects of the pipeline for Black youth; in both areas, the vast majority of research has focused on the conditions and experiences of males. For three decades, scholarly investigations of school discipline have consistently found patterns of over-representation for Black males, revealing a “discipline gap” wherein the responses to behavioral problems of Black males are met with harsher disciplinary measures than for other racial and ethnic groups (Shirley & Cornell, 2011; Welch & Payne, 2011; Lewis, Hancock, James, & Larke, 2008; Skiba, Peterson & Williams, 1997; McFadden, Marsh, Price & Hwang, 1992; McCarthy & Hodge, 1987). Findings from other investigations reveal a strong correlation between youth contact with the justice system and a failure to complete high school, negative attitude about school, academic failure, and the racially disparate use of exclusionary discipline (e.g., suspensions and expulsions) (Lewis, Butler, Bonner, & Joubert, 2010; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Skiba, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Bakken & Kortering, 1999; Bock, Tapscott & Savner,1998; Skiba, Peterson & Williams, 1997; DeRidder, 1991; Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack & Rock, 1986). According to Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier, and Valentine (2009): [O]bserved patters of racial disproportion do not correlate with higher incidence of disruptive behavior by Black students and, therefore, conclude that [Disproportionate Minority Contact] in school discipline is due in part to differential treatment of [students of color] by teachers and administrators (p. 1006). From this finding, it follows that the unequal application of exclusionary discipline may not be in response to differential classroom disruption patterns, but instead may be a function of differential treatment (see also Losen & Skiba, 2010). While largely empirical and rooted in autoethnographic methods that are considered non-generalizable (Casella, 2003), some studies have also found that Black boys and men struggle to achieve in racially segregated environments. In these environments, negative stereotypes about Black males, informed largely by media representations of Black males as perpetrators of urban violence, are pervasive (Jones, A.R., 2011; Farmer, 2010; Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2008).Like discipline, trends associated with a failure to complete school occupy a particularly important space in the Black boy “pipeline,” whether related to family and societal issues, or by virtue of practices and policies within the school environment. Smaller studies show that Black youth are often negatively influenced by school counselors’ social perceptions and as a result, are likely to be placed into special education programs for behavioral issues, rather than for cognitive ability (Moore, Henfield & Owens, 2008). Other research, again while not generalizable to all school settings, reveal education factors associated with the pipeline that include a poor quality of instruction, curriculum, and relationships with school (Jones, 2011). Other factors include a failure to emphasize reading comprehension and provide “culturally responsive literacy instruction” in earlier grade levels (Tatum, 2006, p. 44), as well as a failure to engage Black boys in the classroom, and recognize key warning signs such as ninth graders who earn “fewer than two credits or those who attend school less than 70% of the time” (Jones, 2011, p. 21; see also Balfanz & Legters, 2006). With respect to Black girls, discipline and zero tolerance policies are also among the most researched of the education-system pipeline to incarceration. While patterns of exclusionary discipline are found to produce similar outcomes among Black girls and Black boys (Losen, Martinez, & Gillespie, 2012; Wallace, et al., 2008), the majority of research that examines the impact of discipline on the involvement with the justice system has been geographically concentrated. While not addressed in an exhaustive manner, research that found Black female disengagement from school to be a result of exclusionary discipline policies and practices also found it to be a function of intersecting structures of inequality. For example, Black females are affected by the stigma of having to participate in identity politics that marginalize them or place them into polarizing categories—“good” girls or girls that behave in a “ghetto” fashion—which exacerbate stereotypes about Black femininity, particularly in the context of socioeconomic status, crime and punishment (Jones, N., 2009). When Black girls do engage in acts that are deemed “ghetto” or a deviation from the social norms that define female behavior according to a narrow, White middle-class definition of femininity, they are deemed nonconformative and thereby subject to criminalizing responses (Blake, et al., 2010; Holsinger & Holsinger, 2005). The relationship between educational attainment and school discipline is also a critical component of the pathways to incarceration for Black females. Studies have shown that the academic self-esteem of Black girls declines during their adolescence (AAUW, 1992; Smith, E. J., 1982; Basow & Rubin, 1999), and that Black girls who speak out in classrooms receive negative feedback from their teachers, particularly if the teacher is White (Fordham, 1991). According to Basow and Rubin (1999):

**2. This perceived noncomformity excludes black girls from both feminist and anti-racist discourses, making them venerable to sexual abuse and hetero-patriarchal domination.**

**Williams 2012 ­–** Emily R. Williams. [MA Candidate in Women and Gender Studies]. “Resisting Internalized Oppression: Black Women’s Perceptions of Incarceration.” De Paul University. College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. August 2012. <http://via.library.depaul.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1135&context=etd>

That Black males have dominated racial justice discourse, and that white women have dominated sexual violence/gender equality discourses, has had both systemic and intra-racial community effects for Black women. In particular, endangered Black male narratives within Black communities create precarious expectations for Black women. Endangered Black male narratives advance and contribute to the perception that Black women do not similarly experience systemic racial oppression. Therefore, Black males experiences with racism are often privileged over Black women’s experiences with racism (Crenshaw, 2000, 2012; hooks, 1995; Richie, 1996, 2012). West (1999) describes Black women’s obligation: …Black women’s awareness of the systematic oppression of black men through lynchings, imprisonment, unemployment, and the ever prevalent “rape” charge causes women to feel obligated to be understanding and forgiving of Black men. There are cultural cues that foster the notion that because of the racist oppression suffered by black men, a sacrificial role is demanded of black women. (p. 83) Black women’s perceived privilege in contrast to Black male’s racial oppression can often be translated into the expectation that Black women have an obligation to support racially disenfranchised Black men and put their interests above their own (Richie, 1995, 2012). That Black women are by contrast perceived to have more social mobility, the expectations are set that Black women compensate or use their social “privilege” to support Black men who experience decreased opportunities because of systemic and social racism. Beth Richie (2012) refers to this dynamic as loyalty politics and asserts that these politics also arise from Black women’s understandings that Black men experience racism to a greater extent than do Black women. Rhetoric of racial solidarity can also contribute to Black women internalizing responsibility for the well-being of Black men and their communities. This perception that Black women are safe from racial social oppression illustrates the importance of affirming Black women’s voices and developing resistance strategies specific to their experiences with the PIC. This racial disenfranchisement for Black men being reflective of dominating systems of patriarchy and capitalism, in many cases, plays out in interpersonal violence (hooks, 1995; Smith, 2008). Indeed, Black feminists have examined the ways in which loyalty politics, endangered Black male narratives, and race and gender identities contribute to oppressive experiences for Black women. In a study of incarcerated African American battered women, Richie (1996) defined gender entrapment as: The socially constructed process whereby African American women who are vulnerable to men’s violence in their intimate relationship are penalized for behaviors they engage in even when the behaviors are logical extensions of their racialized gender identities, their culturally expected gender roles and the violence in their intimate relationships. (p. 4). The, “logical extensions of their racialized identities,” (p.4) to which Richie (1996) refers were often informed by cultural values that extended to Black women’s intimate relationships with men. Richie noted that often, the women she interviewed embodied self-sacrificing ideology. The gender roles that women assumed in intimate relationships often involved the woman risking her safety for the betterment of her intimate relationship or for her family. Many of the women in Richie’s study participated in prostitution and drug trafficking (for which they were ultimately incarcerated) wherein they sacrificed their well-being to generate income for their families, selves, and/or intimate partner. These criminal behaviors often constituted relatively “low risk” activity with profitable ends. For this report, intersectional analyses are vital when conceiving of Black women’s potential to internalize responsibility for incarceration, as race, class, and victim-survivor status greatly influence one’s life experiences in America (hooks, 1995, West, 1999). As Black feminists have established, white supremacist heteropatriarchal domination suppresses all other social identities in the interest of privileging its own. Therefore, this discussion of domination illustrates the importance of developing organizing strategies that do not appeal to only one marginalized identity. Rather, models which organize on the basis of challenging the power system based on shared oppression are likely to yield better results for all oppressed identities (Cohen, 1997; Smith, 2008). Furthermore, that the laws and policies which resulted from the civil rights’ movement did not end racial discrimination and secure full equality for Black women calls into question the legitimacy of assimilationist models in achieving liberation. The following section provides a critique of the contemporary political economic landscape and locates with the processes that have intentionally criminalized Black women. Neoliberal capitalist, political, and economic paradigms and the processes of criminalization and market creation demonstrate the ways in which capitalist logic relies on Black women in economically disenfranchised communities to build industry and global profits. Furthermore, the following section discusses the extent to which the state controls economic and criminalized behavior.

**3. This sexual violence to prison pipeline is compounded by an untrained and uncaring justice system which uses torture as a method to deal with sexual abuse, which leads to exacerbated mental trauma, anxiety, paranoia, self-mutilation, and suicide.**

**Vafa 2012 –** Yasmin Vafa [Co-founder and Director of Law and Policy at Human Rights Project for Girls]. “Invisible Prisoners: Why Are So Many Children, Especially Girls, Placed in Solitary Confinement?” June 18th, 2012. <http://rhrealitycheck.org/article/2012/06/18/girls-in-juvenile-justice-an-invisible-population/>

When we hear about solitary confinement, we often imagine it as a form of extreme punishment inflicted on the most vicious and dangerous criminals in prison. The last thing you would expect is for this practice to be inflicted on children. But it is. All across this country, children are being placed in solitary for a host of different reasons ranging from ‘protection’ to the most minor misbehaviors. This practice is even more disturbing when you consider the distinct pathways of girls into the juvenile justice system. We often talk about the “school-to-prison pipeline” for boys —but for girls, it is a totally different narrative, more readily identified as the “sexual-violence-to prison pipeline.” According to the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention, approximately 600,000 girls are arrested in the U.S. annually. Most of these girls are remanded for non-violent offenses such as truancy, running away, loitering, alcohol and substance use, and violations to prior court orders for non-violent status offenses. Moreover, evidence shows that 73 percent of girls in juvenile detention have previously suffered some form of physical or sexual abuse. This abuse is often the factor that propelled the child into the juvenile justice system, as it is often the abuse that is the root cause of the girls’ running away, becoming truant, substance abuse, etc.  Once inside, girls are forced to maneuver a system that does not address their specific needs or take into account the complex trauma they have endured. Family court judges and detention center staff are rarely provided appropriate trauma training and are generally unaware of the damaging impact of policies such as strip searches, physical restraints, and particularly solitary confinement on survivors of physical and sexual abuse and trauma.  There is a growing body of evidence that demonstrates the severe psychiatric consequences of placing individuals, and particularly children in solitary confinement. Prisoners who have experienced solitary confinement have been shown to engage in self-mutilation at much higher rates than the average population. These prisoners are also known to attempt or commit suicide more often than those who were not held in isolation. In fact, studies show that juveniles are 19 times more likely to kill themselves in isolation than in general population and that juveniles in general, have the highest suicide rates of all inmates in jails. Despite all these facts, when girls in the juvenile justice system express evidence of or the desire to self harm, the typical response is to put them in solitary confinement. While these girls are being placed in solitary for their own protection, there is no consideration given to the fact that such practices deepen existing trauma. When subjected to isolation, these youth are often locked down for 23 hours per day in small cells with no natural light.  This confinement can last several days, weeks or even months, which leads to severe anxiety, paranoia, and further exacerbation of mental distress. The ACLU has reported that in certain juvenile detention facilities, girls are restrained with brutal force and are “regularly locked up in solitary confinement — a punishment used for minor misbehaviors as well as for girls who express wanting to hurt themselves.” For example, after conducting interviews with a number of girls in juvenile detention, the ACLU uncovered that some of the reasons behind girls’ solitary confinement were as trivial as giving their crying friend a hug and singing “Happy Birthday.” The report goes on to say that “[n]ot receiving proper treatment and left alone with their emotions, many girls are driven to cut themselves, bang their heads against the concrete walls, and attempt suicide,” which often lead detention facility staff to respond with “physical restraint, pepper spray, and further solitary confinement.” These approaches are simply unacceptable when you take into account the abuse suffered by the vast majority of these girls and their dire need for services and interventions. This week, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Human Rights, and Civil Rights is holding the first-ever Congressional hearing on the issue of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and jails. One of the issues that we hope is brought to light during this hearing is the practice of solitary confinement of girls in the juvenile justice system. Numerous studies show the damaging effects of solitary confinement on children and particularly children with proven histories of mental and physical trauma.  Due to the fact that such a large percentage of girls entering juvenile detention have endured sexual and/or physical trauma, isolation techniques are not an appropriate disciplinary or protective measure on this vulnerable population of children. This abuse of abuse victims must stop. It is time to finally look at thisinvisible population. A population of girls in need of services — not further victimization under the guise of rehabilitation.

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# Observation Two: All Power to the People

**Specifically, statistics prove that a preventative and corrective model of discipline can reduce discipline referrals through violence prevention programs, social skills training, and early intervention strategies to de-escalate bad behavior.**

**NASP 2001 –** National Association of School Psychologists [An Organization Founded to Empower School Pyschologists by Advancing Practices to Improve Student’s Learning, Behavior, and Mental Health “Zero Tolerance and Alternative Strategies: A Fact Sheet for Educators and Policymakers.” <http://www.nasponline.org/resources/factsheets/zt_fs.aspx>

Systemic changes in a school's or district's approach to discipline and behavioral intervention can significantly impact school climate and student learning. Schools implementing effective strategies have reported reductions in office discipline referrals by 20-60%; this results in improved access to academic engaged time and improved academic performance for all students. Schools can utilize their mental health experts - school psychologists, counselors and social workers - to research and develop discipline policies and positive behavior training strategies. Effective and promising alternatives to zero tolerance should involve families and community resources, including: *Violence prevention* - the most frequent components of a violence prevention program include a prevention curriculum; services from school psychologists, counselors or social workers; family and community involvement; and implementation of effective school-wide discipline practices. Some examples of proven programs include: Second Step, Resolving Conflict Creatively Program and Promoting Positive Thinking Strategies (see below). *Social skills training and positive behavioral supports* - interventions that help students with emotional/behavioral disorders and social skills deficits have potential to significantly improve school-wide behavior and safety.  Effective programs include: Stop and Think (Project ACHIEVE) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). *Early intervention strategies* - interventions that target low levels of inappropriate behavior before they escalate into violence can significantly reduce the need for harsh consequences later. Examples of proven practices include First Step to Success (kindergarten) and Positive Adolescent Choices Training (developed for African American youth). Summary. Although zero tolerance policies were developed to assure consistent and firm consequences for dangerous behaviors, broad application of these policies has resulted in a range of negative outcomes with few if any benefits to students or the school community. Rather than increasing school safety, zero tolerance often leads to indiscriminate suspensions and expulsions for both serious and mild infractions and disproportionately impacts students from minority status backgrounds and those with disabilities. Serious dangerous behaviors require consistent and firm consequences to protect the safety of students and staff; however, for many offenses addressed by zero tolerance policies, more effective alternative strategies are available. Systemic school-wide violence prevention programs, social skills curricula and positive behavioral supports lead to improved learning for all students and safer school communities.

**Therefore, I propose the following plan: The United States federal government should mandate all public schools adopt preventative and corrective models of discipline including violence prevention programs, social skills training, positive behavioral supports, and early intervention strategies. I reserve the right to clarify in cross-examination.**